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County Executive

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Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Employees

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service has prepared guidelines for you to follow in the event of a fire. Please read and practice these suggestions. We hope you are never in a fire; however, if you are, your chances of survival will increase greatly with a little planning.

Fires can be frightening. In addition to the intense heat, the fire alarm will probably be very loud, water may be pouring out of sprinkler heads, the smoke may make your eyes water, and you may be coughing. Here are the steps to take to prepare for a fire:

➤ **Learn the location of every exit in your building.**

In an emergency, you may need to go through areas that you are not familiar to you. The hallways may be dark and full of smoke. Know where every door is, and learn how to open the windows. You should know two ways (doors, windows) out of every room.

➤ **Learn the location of every stairway. Do NOT use the elevators.**

Some stairways automatically become pressurized with clean air when the fire alarm is activated. This will keep the stairways free of smoke and heat. If your stairwells are not automatically pressurized, the fire department may use heavy-duty fans to pressurize the stairs.

➤ **Do NOT use the elevators.**

Some elevators are heat-activated, and will automatically go to the fire. They will not stop on another floor, even if the button has been pressed for another floor. Others will automatically return to the lobby, which may be where the fire is located. Also, loss of electrical power may cause you to become trapped on an elevator.

➤ **Learn how to telephone the fire department.**

To report a fire or medical emergency in Montgomery County, call 911. Remember to leave the hazardous area and go to a safe place before calling 911.

The law requires every fire to be reported, even if the fire has been extinguished.

➤ **Keep exits clear.**

If you see an obstacle (trash can, chair) in the way of an exit, move it! If you have to crawl out through that doorway in the dark, you'll be glad you did.

➤ **Keep doors shut.**

Fire doors (door to stairwells, and doors separating one area from another) prevent the spread of fire and smoke; doors that are shut may help to smother the fire.

➤ **Learn the name and address of each building where you work regularly**

As soon as your 911 call is answered, the name, telephone number, and address of the location from which you are calling will be displayed on a computer screen at the 911 center. However, the dispatcher will want to know additional information such as the exact location of the fire, the cause of the fire, whether anyone is trapped, and some other details. Also, if you have evacuated the building and are calling from another location, the dispatcher will not have the correct address unless you provide it. Please do not hang up until the dispatcher tells you to do so.

➤ **Obtain a copy of the fire evacuation plan for your building.**

A fire evacuation plan should include:

- *Designation of floor wardens and assistant floor wardens
(These are the people who will help ensure that the evacuation goes smoothly)*
- *Specific safety features of the building:*
 - *Does the fire alarm system ring on every floor, or only the three floors closest to the fire?*
 - *Are the stairwells pressurized?*

***Need help preparing a fire evacuation plan?
Call the Community Safety Education Division at (240) 777.2448
(this is a local call).***

- *Designation of employees who need assistance in an evacuation, and designation of specific people to assist them*
- *Designation of the employee(s) who will call 911*
- *Instructions on how to activate the building alarm*
- *A meeting place for those who evacuate*

➤ **If your vehicle is in a parking garage connected to your building, do NOT go to it.**

Go directly to your meeting place. Retrieve your vehicle after the emergency is resolved.

➤ **Request fire drills for your building, and participate in them!**

Many people tend to panic during a fire. Also, the toxic smoke produced during a fire can cause confusion. By practicing your fire evacuation plan (including actually activating the fire alarm), you will increase your chances of survival.

Many employees are reluctant to participate in fire drills, feeling their time should be used on other tasks. However, many people who die in fires could probably have escaped if they had received proper training.



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FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

for your place of employment

- _____ I know how to call the fire department – the number is 911.
 - _____ I will call the fire department from a safe location.
 - _____ I will not try to fight the fire before the fire department has been called.
 - _____ The name of my building is: _____
 - _____ The address of my building is: _____
 - _____ I have a copy of the evacuation plan for my building
 - _____ If the people in my office evacuate, we will meet at: _____
 - _____ If the parking garage is in the building where there is a fire, I will not go to the parking garage.
 - _____ I have obtained or drawn a diagram of my building, and have marked the doors, exits and fire extinguishers.
 - _____ If there is a fire while I am at work, I am responsible for: _____
 - _____ I participate in fire drills at work.
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